An Introduction to the loue of God.

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Accompted among the workes of S. Augustine, and set forth in his name, very profitable to moue all men to loue God for his benefits receaued

MATH. 22.

¶ Thou shalte loue the Lorde thy God with al thy harte, with al thy soule, and with al thy mynd. This is the greatest and the first commaundement. The second is lyke to this. Thou shalte loue thy neighboure as thy selfe. In these two commaundementes hange all the law and the Prophets.

1 IOHN. 2.

Loue not the World, neither the things that are in the worlde. If a man loue the World, the loue of the Father is not in hym.

Seene and alowed accordinge to the Quenes Maiesties Iniunctions.

Anno, 1574.


SOIT QVI MAL Y PENSE
HONI


MUSEUM

¶TO THE MOST vertuous and noble Princes Queene Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queene of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, defender of the fayth. &c.

AMong all other benefites, moſt gracious ſoueraigne Ladie, which God in mercie hath beſtowed vpon your roial perſon, the knowledge of GOD is moſt ſinguler, & for the which we your humble Subiectes haue moſte cauſe to prayſe God. But I meane not the knowledge of hys eſſence or beyng, whych none of the Angels or heauenly powers are able to comprehend: Neyther yet that general knowledge of God which is gotten by his creatures and workes from the creation of the world. Which although it bee of no force to chaunge the mynde, & regenerate to true godlynes, yet are all men by it made inex-

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cuſeable before God, in as muche as when they knewe God, they glorified him not as God. But I mean the chiefe and ſinguler knowledge of God, wherby not onely his vniuerſall power, and infinite mercy repleniſhing the whole earth, but alſo his vnſearchable counſel in ſauing vs by Chriſt, hidden from the world, is well perceiued and knowen. This knowledge of God hath eternall lyfe annexed vnto it, as ſayth Chriſt: "Thys is lyfe eternall, that they myght know thee the onely true God, & Ieſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent." And as this knowledge of God doth comprehende in it the counſell of God to ſaue vs by Chriſt: ſo it doth renue the whole mã, & vrgeth hym to apprehend that good thing which it ſheweth, accordyng to the ſaying of Chriſt: "you ſhall knowe the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free."

Roma. 1.

Iohn. 17.

That this knowledge of God, by hys good ſpirite, already planted in your Maieſties hart, might dayly encreaſe, & more and more bee confirmed, I haue choſen out a litle ſhort treatiſe, ſtirryng

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and mouing verye much to the loue of God, through the consideration of hys benefites: Accompted amonge the workes of saint Augustine, & set forth in hys name, to dedicate the same to your Highnes. The diligent vewe and consideration whereof, I knowe ryght well, wyll not a litle enflame and set on fire those sparkes of the knowledge & loue of God, already by Gods good spirite kindled in your royall hart. For I am not ignorant, most gracious soueraigne, of your good and gracious nature, and how muche your Maiestye is enclined to loue and mercy, to pity the poore & miserable, to respect the causes of such as are in distresse, to help the oppressed, to pardon offences, to doo good to all men, which all are nothing els but fruites of that knowledge and loue of God, whych by the woorde of God, and Gospell of Christ you haue conceaued. And as the same hath alredy brought forth these fruites, so I nothing doubt, but the continuall meditation of Gods infinite loue, and innumerable benefits, wyl bring forth more

fruites

fruites, euen ſuch, as in this litle treatiſe are expreſſed, namely the ſenſible feeling and taſte of Gods loue and mercy, to be altered into a new creature, to be altogether rauiſhed in the loue of God and heauenly deſires: To bee enflamed with Gods holy ſpirit, and the zeale of Gods houſe, euen throughly to deuour your moſt gracious hart, and with continuall ſolace & ioy to walke ſafely before God in ſinglenes of conſcience, for the accompliſhing whereof we all haue cauſe to pray.

And as the reformation of the church and ſtate of religion by your Maieſtye begun, hath hetherto luckely ſucceded, being bleſſed of God with good ſucces in all ciuill affaires, and that with ſuche peace and quietnes, as the like in our fathers daies, and among other Nations, hath bene ſildome ſene: So it were to be wiſhed, that the harts of al your ſubiectes might with lyke felicitie, to the furtherance and finiſhing of the worke begun, haue conſented together in the confeſsiō of one vndoubted truth, that all contentions and quarels layde apart,

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Or rather begun by her Brother, K. Edw. VI.

we might with one mouth and mynde haue glorified God the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ." But the waye and meane to worke this effect is, that the loue of God, by the consideration of his benefits, and great mercy in sauing vs by Christ, be first plãted in our harts, which once being grounded, wyl verye hardly be remoued, either by trouble, affliction, persecution, or any other peryll. But what soeuer shall be suffered of vs, for the truth, and furtherance of religion, and for loue of him, who first hath loued vs, wyll not onely be tollerable, but also delectable and easy. It is the propertie we see, of an honest faithfull wyfe, not onelye to loue and reuerence her Husband, but also to delight onely in him, not so greatly for the prosperitie and wealth of her Husband, as for the hartie loue that she hath conceiued toward him: For which loues sake, she chuseth rather with hym to lyue in poore estate, then with anye other to enioy great ritches and wealth. So no doubt, it is the propertie of Christes spouse, whose hart is touched with the

loue

loue of God, to ſolace and comfort her ſelfe onely in his loue, in reſpect whereof, all pleaſure, ioy, & loue of this world waxeth vyle, and chuſeth rather wyth him to beare afflictions, and ſuffer hard thinges, then with the world to enioye the pleaſures of ſinne for a ſeaſon. For ſurely ſuche is the nature of the loue of God, that as it nothing forceth of, or regardeth not the afflictiõs of thys life, ſo it vtterlye contemneth and treadeth vnder foote the vanities & loue of this world, as nothing, in reſpect of his loue, who firſt hath loued vs.

To the furtherance whereof, the diligent reading of this litle treatiſe, wyll very much helpe. Wherein the Author, euen of ſenſe and feeling, and as one all together rauiſhed with the loue of god ſetteth forth how diuerſly, by his benefites and loue, we are mooued to loue him, and that his vnſpeakeable loue towards vs, can no waies better be recompenced, then by loue againe. Wherein if it ſhall pleaſe your Maieſty to beſtow ſome ſhort tyme, I know the more it is read, the more comfortable delight wil be con-

be conceiued therein. And though paraduenture this myght bee thought of ſome a trauaile altogether ſuperfluous, to tranſlate the ſame out of Lattin, in which tong it was firſt wrytten, and to dedicate the ſame to your highnes, conſidering the excellencie of your knowledge in the ſame tounge, wherein you might vvith more delectation & pleaſure haue ſolaced your ſelfe: yet to me it ſhould not ſeeme ſuperfluous, beyng ſet foorth in a language that moſte of your Subiectes do vnderſtand, & therfore like to redounde to the profite of the moe. And beſides forth, that vvhich is ſet foorth vnder the protection and priuiledge of Princes, is of all men the more diligently read.

And to vvhom myght I more aptlye dedicate the introduction to the loue of God, then to ſo godly and vertuous a Prince, out of vvhoſe breſt ther flovveth ſuch ſtreames of mercy, and flames of loue tovvard her ſubiectes, that ſhee ſeemeth an apt & meete ſoyle of God, vvherein the loue of God myght profitablye be planted. The God of loue

therefore, enflame your moſt royal hart vvith his loue, and vvith his holy ſpirit direct you in the ryght courſe to eternall lyfe: That in this life your Maieſty may haue ſuch ſence and feeling of hys loue, that in tyme to come you may haue the full fruition therof in his eternall glorye.

Amen.

Your Maieſties moſt humble Subiect and faithful ſeruaunt,
Edmund Roffen.

Viuat Regina.

Ad ſereniſſimam D.D.

Elizabetham Angliæ, Franciæ, & Hiberniæ Reginam, fidei defenſ. &c.

ΕΠΙΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ.

Neſcia virgo viri, regni Regina potentis,
Nobilibus multum ſollicitata procis
Non ſociata tamen: quia non mortale videtur
Coniugium mentem tangere poſſe tuam.
Accipe diuini cœleſtia pignora ſcripti,
Vnde tuum flagret pectus amore Dei.
Qui pius, in Chriſto te tam redamabit Ieſu,
Quam fuerit Chriſtus totus amore tuus.
Sed tuus ille quidem manet, aternũq́ manebit
Illius in ſtudio tu quia fixa manes.
Nil opus eſt igitur noſtro, Regina, libello
Qui docet vt facias quod prior ipſa facis.
Nil opus eſt fateor: forſan tamen iſta legendo
Eſſe tuus poterit multiplicatus amor.

Ad eandem Principem.

Sacra deo Princeps, et ſacro nomine virgo,
Accipe quæ ſacro pignora fonte fluunt:
Omni digna quidẽ, ſed te digniſſima (prĩceps)
Principe, ſacrato nomine, corde, fide,

Nomen ab Hebræis ſacrati fœderis index:
Mens venit a ſummo numine ſancta tibi.
Atqui ſanctã ſacra decent, tibi cõſecro ſacra,
Principibus multis vix bene nota viris.

Ad eandem Principem.

Chara deo Princeps, diuinum dilige numen:
Viue Deo, et viues Elizabetha diu.
Et patriæ perchara tuæ, perchara Britannis,
Quæ nacta es, recta ſceptra tuere manu.
Gratáq; tum muſis gratas amplectere muſas:
Maximus at tibi ſit religionis amor.
Quæ facis, et facies, neq; tã monuiſſe iuuabit,
Quam feciſſe iuuat ſingula ſponte tua.

Ad eandem Principem.

Summa laus regum fuit inclytorum,
Fortiter fines patriæ tueri:
Quod tamen non præſtitit vlla regum
Regia virtus.
Extulit quoſdam Deus ipſe reges:
Deputit quoſdam Deus ille reges:
Præſtiterunt omnia ſola diui
Sceptra potentis.

Ergo

Ergo diuinum reuerere numen:
Numinis tanti celebrato nomen:
Vnius laudem tua vota ſpectent
Fuſa per auras.

Ad Librum.

Fælix marmoreas migrato in ædes:
Intra limina clarioris Aulæ:
Si noui dominam palatij huius,
Vltro purpureum petet libellum.

¶ DE MODO DILIGENdi Deum diſtichon.

Dilige mente deum tota, ratione modoq́,
Omnem qui ſuperet cum ratione modum.

FINIS.

To the Reader.

FOR as muche as that famous Clarke Eraſmus, and profounde Cenſor, both of wyt and skill, letteth not firſt to confeſſe that thys treatiſe following, taſteth of good learning, though the ſtile, phraſe, and order differ from the workes of S. Auguſtine, in the number of the which it hath bene accompted: And next, that it deſcryeth or bewraieth a very diligent Reader of that holy father his volumes, out of whoſe confeſſions eſpecially hee hath inſerted into this Pamphlet manye wholeſome and proper ſentences, as well teaching and prouing that S. Auſtine doth ſo often inculcate: namely that nothing was create without the Word of God, as mouing and ſtyrring vs to ghoſtly loue and affection, from the right feeling of the which it ſeemeth to haue flowen: I am the bolder to preſume that to thee (good Reader) it ſhall be both the more leefe and acceptable: And the rather becauſe that I haue endeuoured my ſelfe to the vttermoſt of my power, in the tranſlatyng hereof, ſo to expreſſe the copye vſed by the Author, as no obſcuritie (I truſt) may ſeme to remaine, and ſo

With

With him to haue iterated one thyng or matter, that it may rather ſerue as a drop by oft falling to pearce more deepelye, then to breede or induce any lothſomnes or ſacietie. For albeit that thinges earthlye, vayne, and tranſitorie may iuſtly bring with them a certaine tedious diſdaine, when they are to often or commonly repeated, or lacke the releefe of pleaſant varietie, yet am I perſwaded, and ſo would I haue thee, that thinges heauenly, euerlaſting, endles and durable, and verely repleate wyth blyſſe and felicitie, ſo worthely deſerue the Poet hys teſtimonie, that the oftener they be inculcate, the more they ſhall double their pleaſure wyth profit. Take this therefore in gree and good worth, how ſoeuer for want of good methode it ſeeme to be confuſed, as a wholeſome meditation, and no leſſe needfull then fruitfull for this tyme and ſeaſon, in the whyche ſelfe loue, friēding of the fleſh, and vanity of the world ſo vniuerſally rage and raigne, as I pity to ſee, & am ſorry to report. For herein thou mayſt by contemplation and vew of thy duty to God, & his loue to thee, learne to abandon whatſoeuer to thy ſoule health is repugnant or aduerſant, without the interlacing of ſuperſtitious vanities or feare of infection proceding frō popery.

For

For in auoyding thereof, I confesse me plainly that I haue euen wittingly vsed in this trãslation a certain fredome and libertie, and reduced the sense of the Author, to the consonancy, and Canon of the holy scripture.

For as I acknowledge it to be great and presumptuous impiety, to racke or vse force in diuine testimonies, suche I meane as are included within the compasse of both Testaments, as holden & allowed for canonical scriptures: beyng by God his own mouth prohibited anye way to wrest or to wring them: so I thinke it not vnlawfull, but rather requisite and necessarie, in translating or readyng the bookes of Interpretours, be they olde, be they newe, or what soeuer they be, sithens they cannot well be without some wartes of errour, especiallye when they are conceaued & written in mood and affection, or rest in the preiudicate opinions of humane infirmitie, or willingly followe the iniquitie of their time: to vse such moderation, discretion and iudgement grounded vpon holy writ, as by diminishing, adding, altering, or rasing, they may reasonably be amended, and as in part, so in all made fruitfull to the Reader. This if any man either of spiced conscience, or wayward mynde, dislike or con-

trole, I wish him more wyt, then fantastically to desire to haue hurtfull thinges ioyned to the wholesome as of necessity, especially when they maye conueniently either be taken awaye, or chaunged, without preiudice done to God his word, or offence geuen to good men. For I hold him an vnwise man, and more then frantick in folly, that wil haue any such opinion of any Phisicion, how learned or skilful so euer he be, that because hee hath receaued at his handes many wholesome drugs, and comfortable confections, which at sundry times turned to hys ease, health and sanitie: that a poyson by the same Phisition in the ende or among them so ministred, shall not be able to annoy or to hurt him: especially when the drugs or confections before geuen, had neyther qualitie, quantitie, nor operation in them to qualifie, resist, or expell the poison. And yet is there no earthly poison so pestilent to the body, as the poyson of errour is noysome to the soule. And therfore to fantasie any earthly man so muche in the discourse of anye peece of doctrine (considering that as he may both deceiue and be deceiued, so he may therin couertly conuey into the eares of his hearer, as many damnable paradoxes as Christian articles) that not onely the care

shall

ſhall bee taken awaye from vs to eſchewe hys hereſies, but alſo a deſire faire kindled to lyke and to learne them, Where nothing is infarced to their confutation, I holde it ſo incurable a peece of frenſie, as all the pollicies in the World are not able to tame.

Thus truſtyng that I haue not onelye acquaynted thee With the profit and cõmoditie Which this treatiſe ſhall yeld thee, but that I haue alſo rendred a ſufficient reaſon of my libertie in tranſlation, and of alteryng the ſenſe Where it tended any Way to the derogation of Gods glory by attributing to much to man his merites and deſeruinges, and aduertiſing thee to eſteeme no man his Workes, opinions, doctrine, or counſail, further then they ſhall agree With the touchſtone of all truth and veritie: I wiſh thee the grace of God his holye ſpirite to conduct & leade thee into all ſuch thinges as ſhall ſtand With thine owꝑ dutie, and tend to the glorie of the Whole Trinitie.

FINIS.

To the Reader.

IF good to learne be thine entent,
And not to plain of tyme yll ſpent:
But ſo̅ employ thy preſent payne,
As endles fruit may be thy gayne:
This Treatiſe reade, and herein vew
Al duties to thy Sauiour dew.
For this doth teache for thy behoue,
The lord thy god how thou ſhalt loue
For loue of thee him ſelfe that gaue
To death, fro̅ death thy ſoule to ſaue.

¶ An introduction to the loue of God.

¶ The first Chapter.

That the loue of God and thy neighbour cannot be seperated.



With wakefull heede, and diligent mynde, earnest endeuour, and continual carefulnes, it becommeth & behoueth vs, to searche and to learne, how, and what way, we may escape hell torment, and purchace heauens ioy: Sithens neither that torment may be auoyded, nor that ioy procured, except the meanes be knowen, how that one may be shunned, & that other attained. Let vs therfore the more willingly heare, and the more diligently consider, the wordes of the Apostle, in the which he proposeth these two thinges, to wete, that heauens ioy is vnspeakeable: and which is the waye that leadeth vnto life: For he saith, that neyther eye hath seene, nor eare hath heard, nor the hart of man conceiued the things which God hath prepared for them that *1. Cori. 2.*

loue him. Loe now, euen by thys that the Apostel saith, that GOD hathe prepared good thinges for them that loue him, it appeareth, that loue is both the way, and the meane by the which we aspire vnto them. But the loue of God, without the loue of thy neighbour cānot be had, as witnesseth S. John, who saith: Ye that loueth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he loue God whom he seeth not? And this cōmaundement haue we from God, that whoso loueth God, shall also loue his neighbour. And thus in theese two loues consisteth that true loue which thapostle speaketh of saying: And yet shew I vnto you a more excellent waye. This more excellent way is loue, which leadeth to that heauenly coūtrie, and without the which no man can come vnto it.

1. Iohn. 4

1. Cor. 12

But who is in this way? or who knoweth it? Forsoth he that loueth both God and his neighbour. Howe then is God first, and next the neighbour to be loued? We must loue God more thē our selues, and our neighbour as our selues. We

loue

loue God more then our selues, when we in all thinges preferre his pleasure and cõmaundementes before our own wyls. But our neighbour we are not cõmaunded to loue aboue our selues, but as our selues, that is: to will, and to wish vnto him all the goodnes which we ought to wyll or wish to our selues, and specially the euerlasting ioy and blysse, and to the attainment thereof to assist, and to helpe him both with bodely & spiritual goodes, as reason requireth, and abilitie permitteth. In consideration whereof the Lord sayth in the Gospell: Whatsoeuer ye would that men should do vnto you, doo ye euen the same vnto them also. And S. John saith: Let vs not loue in word, neither in tong, but in deede and veritie. But who are those neyghbours whom we ought thus to loue? Truly all Christian men, Iewes, and Heathen, friendes and enemies. *Math. 8.* *1. Iohn. 3.*

¶ The second Chapter.

¶ Why and how God is to be loued.

SIthens al our soulehealth then consisteth in loue, why, & how the Lord is to be loued, let vs diligently weigh and consider But to excite, nourish, and increase the loue of God in vs, nothing is so forceble, as the often remembrance, and diligent consideration of his benefites. So great thinges hath he geuen vs, heaped and bestowed vpon vs, that our soule vtterlye fainteth in the viewe of his bountie and goodnes. But in this case though we be not able to yelde vnto him so many, and so great thankes, as beseemeth our loue, and becommeth our seruice: yet must we not faile, to render him so many, and so great as we can. And see wherefore: to wete, for his benefites, which for his great loue, and free benevolence, our merites or deserues requiring none suche, the Lord hath moste graciouslye bestowed vpon vs, he is entirelye of vs to bee beloued. But how, or in what sort God is to be loued, that his commaundement, which he so straightly prescribed, and so preciselye wyl haue kept and obserued on our part,

doth

doth manifestly shew and declare.

Geue care therefore, O Man, to that commaundement, which of áll other is greatest, and chiefest. Geue eare I say, and heare it diligentlye, print it in memory, thinke on it continuallye, and to thy power fulfyll it dayly and hourelye. That commaundement is this: Thou shalt loue the Lord thy God with all thy hart, that is, with al thine vnderstãding, and with all thy soule, that is, with al thy will, and with al thy minde, that is, with al thy memory, that thou mayest reserue & keepe all thy thoughtes, al thy lyfe, and all thy skill and knowledge, to yeld vnto him thine obedience and seruice. But peraduenture, because thou deemest thy selfe to be loued of God but a litle, therefore thou art not afeard to loue hym againe but lightly. Search therfore, and weigh with thy selfe in thy minde, with what giftes and benefits he hath endued thee already, and what he hath promised to bestowe on thee hereafter: And thou shalt forthwith finde, that thou art boũde to lone him beyond all might, & measure. *Deut, 6.*

But

But to the end that the loue of God may in thee be quickned, & augment the more aboundantlye: weighe and consider by whom, why, and to what end mankinde was first created, and what thinges God made for the vse, and ease of man. For this is to be gathered, that of the thinges created, whether they be heauenly or terrestriall, visible or inuisible, ther is none other cause, but the mere goodnes of the Creator, which is the Lord God onelye one, and alone. Whose goodnes is of such greatnes, that of that blissefulnes, by the which he is most highlie happy, & blessed for euer, he willeth other to be partners, because he seeth it may be imparted, but not diminished. That goodnes therfore which him selfe is, and by the which him selfe is blessed, onely of his free goodnes, and not of necessitie, woulde he impart and communicate vnto others, because it appertaineth to the chiefe good, to haue will to be profitable, and beseemeth the most mightie, not to be hurtfull. But because no man is able to bee partaker of his blissefulnes, but by vnderstanding,

(for

(for the more it is vnderstanded, the more fully it is had) God made a reasonable creature, which might not onelye vnderstand the chiefe good, but that by vnderstanding might also loue it, and by louyng, myght possesse it, and by possessing, might vse it: and so distinguished that creature, that part might remaine in the purity of him selfe, and not be ioyned with a bodye, as the Aungell, and parte might be coupled to a body, as the soule. The reasonable creature therfore, is deuided into that whiche hath not, and to that which hath a bodye? That which is voyde of body is called an Aungel. And that which hath bodye, is called a Man, consistinge of the flesh, and a reasonable soule.

The principall cause therfore, why the reasonable creature was ordeyned, is ỹ goodnes of God. So that both man, and Aungell, were made bycause of Gods goodnes, for by reason that god is good we are, & in as much as we are, we are good also. But to what ende, was the reasonable creature created? To praise

God

God, to serue him, and to vse and enioy him. In the which the creature him selfe profiteth, and not God. For God is euer perfit and fulfilled of all soueraine bounty, and goodnes, & can neither be increased, nor diminished. And therefore that reasonable creature was created of god, is to bee referred to the goodnes of the Creator, and the profyt of the creature. In so muche that as oft as this question is asked, why or to what ende, the reasonable creature was made? The aunswer must be, for the goodnes of the Creator, & the profit of the creature. For it auayleth the creature to serue God, and both to haue and enioy him.

¶ The third Chapter.

¶ The cause of the creation of Angels men, and all other creatures.

BOth Aungell therefore, and Man are sayd to be made for God, not bycause God the Creatour, and most blyssfull, hath nede of the seruice either of Angell or Man, for hee hath no want of our goods,

goods, but that both Man and Angell, might serue and vse him, whom to serue is to raygne. For in this the seruant receiueth the profit, and not he to whom it is done. And as man was made for god, so the world was made for man, that it might serue hym. Man therefore was placed in such state and degree, both that he shoulde be serued, and that he should serue: that on eche syde, all the goodnes might redound to hym selfe, as well of the seruice which he receiueth, as of that which he doth. For so God would that Man shuld serue him, that not God, but Man myght bee profited by the seruice. And he also would that the world shuld so serue Man, as Man thereby might in like sort be holpen. Al the goodnes therfore redoūded to man, both of that which was made for hym, and of that also, for the which him selfe was made. For all thynges are ours sayth the Apostle, the thynges aboue vs, the thynges equall with vs, and the thinges inferiour vnto vs: The thinges aboue vs are ours, to vse and enioy, as God in Trinitie, & trinitie in vnitie, The thinges equall with 1. Cor. 3.

vs, are ours to agree wyth all: as the Angels, who albeit at this present they be aboue vs, shall in time to come notwithstanding be our Mates, and our equals. The thinges inferiour vnto vs, are also ours, to stand vs in stede, and to serue our necessities. As the thynges which pertaine to the Lord and Master, are also the Seruauntes, not by takyng from the Lord or Mayster hys ryght or title, but because they also serue to the vse of the seruant. It is therfore said in certain places of the scriptures, that Angels doo serue vs, because they for our sakes, are sent forth to minister. In consideration wherof the Apostle hath these wordes: Are they not all ministring spirites, that are sent to minister for theyr sakes which shal be heiers of saluation? Neither let this seeme incredible to man in as muche as the creator himselfe, and Kyng of aungels came not to be serued, but to serue, & to geue his lyfe for many. And the aungels are sayde to offer oure prayers, and vowes vnto God, not bycause they teache or instruct God of our desires or meaninges, who knoweth all

Heb. 1.

things

thinges before they come to passe, as well hee knoweth them after they are done, but bycause they craue to vnderstande Gods pleasure and will touchinge these thinges, and what they shall know to be disposed, according to Gods hest, & commaundement, that they conuey to vs, eyther openly or in secrete: wher vpon the Angell sayd vnto men. When ye prayed I offered your prayers vnto God. In like manner, euen we also, whē we pray we do not teach god, as if he were ignorant eyther of our desire, or of our nede: but ỹ reasonable creature must of necessity commit & refer his temporal causes to the eternal verity: eyther by desiring that which he could haue, or by consentinge and asking what Gods will is, he shall haue. From the highe habitation of the heauens therfore, doth the soueraine bountye and loue of God drawe downe vnto vs the aungels of God, to enquire Gods will for vs, to visite and to helpe vs, for God, for vs, and for themselues. For god, bycause that as meete is, they imitate the merciful bowels of his loue, and pity towards vs, for vs bicause that *Tobi. 12.*

in vs, they haue their owne image and lykenes. in great admiration and reuerence, for them selues, because that with feruent desire and longing, they awayte the supply of their orders by vs.

¶ The fourth Chapter.

¶ Of the loue of God towards vs.

THis therfore is most nedefull and necessary, that euery man seuerally do consider himselfe, and when he hath attained the ful perfect knowledge of his owne worthynes & dignity (least he do iniury to his creatour) in no wise to loue anye thing, that anye waye is to him selfe inferiour. For the thinges that in them selues considered, do seeme to be beutifull, when they are compared with other, are but homely, and vyle. And as it is great folly, to ioyn foule thinges, w fayre thinges, So is it not vnsemely, of those thinges which haue a meane and no counterfayte beutye, to make a comparison, and to matche them wyth the things that are most fayre, and beutiful. Therefore my soule vew well thine owne beuty,

beuty, and therby learne and vnderstand what beutye thou shalt loue. But if the sight of thy selfe be so duld, dusket, or darkned, by thine own negligence, that thou canst behold thine owne selfe, neither as it becommeth, nor as it behoueth thee: why yet doest thou not by the iudgemēt at the least of som other, gather that true estimation of thy self, which thou shouldest doo? Thou hast a Spouse, but hys soueraigne beuty thou knowest not, because thou neuer yet saw his face or countenance. But he seeth thee: and if he saw thee not, he would not loue thee. This Spouse differryng to shewe, or present him selfe vnto thee, hath sent thee giftes, as pledges and tokens of his loue, wherby thou mightest know his affection towardes thee. If thou myghtest see hys face, thou wouldest bee nothyng doubtful: for then shouldest thou perceiue that he, who is so faire, so comelye, so beutyfull, and so synguler, would not be enamoured at the syght of thee, if some synguler beutye in thee, far passing the beuty of euery other creature, dyd not moue and allure him to that loue and affection,

not

not because it was thyne, but hys owne beuty in thee. Therefore what meanest thou? or whereabout goest thou? Because thou canst not see hym presentlye, by meanes of his absence, therefore wilt thou neyther be afearde nor ashamed to do him iniury, and not onelye contemne his synguler loue, but also to yelde thy selfe vassaile to thyne own lust and sensualitie? Do not so my Soule, do not so, for if thou bee not yet able to conceaue what one he is, that loueth thee, yet consider at the least, the earnest, the pledge, the gage, and the token whych hee hath sent, and geuen thee: for it maye so bee, in and by his gyft which thou hast wyth thee, and in thy possession, thou mayest learne wyth what affection thou oughtest to loue him, and with what zeale and diligence thou shouldest reserue thy selfe for him. His earnest is notable, his gift is great, and noble: For it standeth not with the Maiesty of a great man to geue small thinges, nor with the discretion of a wyse man, for a small thyng to geue great. And yet a great thing is it which he hath geuen thee. But greater is it,

which

which he loueth in thee. But what is it O my Soule, which thy Spouse in hys kindnes hath geuen thee? Looke vpon the worlde, and examine whether there be any thing therin that doth not service vnto thee. Euery creature directeth his course to this ende, to wayte and tende vpon thee, to do thee seruice, to supplye thy neede, and to tender thy profit. And accomplisheth both thy delight and commoditye, according to that which eyther aboundeth in them, or remaineth in thee. The heauen, the earth, the ayre, the sea, and all that in them is, cease not to accomplish and to fulfyll the same. The circuite of times also, and the annual renolution, whych wyth reuined parres doth renew, and refresh the old, repaire the ruinons, & restore the decayed, with cõtinual sustenance serueth thy purpose. Who then thinkest thou, hath ordayned these thinges? who hath geuen that cõmaundement, or prescribed to Nature, with her whole reuenewes as it were, to maintaine thy port? Thou receauest a benefit, and knowest not the Author, the gift is manifest, but the geuer is hidden,

and

and yet thine owne reason suffereth thee not to be doubtfull, but instructeth thee, that this is not thine own due, but an other bodies benefite. Whatsoeuer he be therfore, he hath done very much for vs. And hee that coulde fynde in his hart to geue vs so much, hath also loued and affectioned vs as much. The gift therfore declareth both who loueth, & who must so highly be loued.

And what great folly is it, not to coueet the loue of one so mighty: and howe wicked and peruers not to loue him that is so loning and louelye? Therefore if thou loue anye thinges contained vnder heauen, loue them as thine Inferiours, loue them as thy seruauntes, as the tokens of thy Spouse, as the giftes of thy friende, and the benefites of thy Lorde: and in such sort yet, as thou may alwaies remember, that thou art bounde and beholding vnto hym, and that thou ought to loue those thinges, not for thē selues, but for him, nor with him, but for and by him, & finallye, that thou must loue him aboue them, because he both made them, and gaue them vnto thee.

¶ The fift Chapter.

¶ Of the fruition of God.

NOwe beware my Soule, that thou (as God forbydde thou shouldest) be not accompted a breaker of thy faith to him, by louing the giftes of the geuer, more then the affection or zeale of the Louer. And yet shalt thou do greater iniurye to hys loue, if thou receyue hys giftes, and doo not recompence his good wyll. Either therfore refuse his giftes, if thou can, or if thou cannot so do, yelde loue for loue, in due quantitie and measure. Loue him for him selfe, loue thy selfe for him: loue him to vse him, and so loue thy selfe that thou may not be hated, but loued of him. Loue him I say in the gifts that he hath geuen thee, loue him to thy vse, and loue thy selfe for hym. For this is pure and chaste loue, that hath in it neither dishonestie nor filth, nor any thing els that is euyll or transitorie.

Consider therefore (O my Soule) what thinges thou hast receiued, cõmon with all, speciall with some, and syngu-ler or proper to thy selfe alone. And in

all these thynges which hee hath geuen thee, whether they be common, speciall, or proper, loue thy selfe intirely. For together wyth all them, before whom hee hath preferd thee, by singuler giftes, hee hath also loued thee. Thou art loued I say, in euerye creature, thou art loued with all good thynges, and thou art loued aboue all euyll thinges: And if this yet seeme but small vnto thee, that thou art loued aboue all euyl thinges, weygh howe good those thynges are by vertue of creation, that in euery condicion haue receiued lesse goodnes then thou. And first thinke, O my Soule, that the tyme was when thou were not, and that thou receiuedst it by the gift of God, that thou began to bee,

¶ The sixt Chapter.

¶ Of the free giftes of creation, and regeneration.

IT was therefore the gift of God that thou were made. But hadst thou geuen him any thing before thou were made, or before thou were created,

created, that in respect therof he shoulde make or create thee? Verelye nothinge haddest thou giuen, neither couldest thou geue before thou were framed, or fashioned. Yf God therfore had giuen thee nothing els but thy being, yet were he to be praysed, and loued of thee for euer. But truth it is, he hath giuen more, in that he hath not onely gyuen it thee, to bee: but also to be both beutifull, and fayre. Neither coulde the bountye of the geuer bee hereia finished. For ouer and aboue this he hath giuen more, and therby the more drawen vs to his owne image, and lykenes. For this was his meaninge, this was his wyll, and pleasure, to draw thē vnto him by likenes, whō he had drawē to himselfe by loue. He hath therfore giuen it vs to bee, and not onely to be, but also to be fayre, and not onely to be faire, but also to liue, so as we may passe, and excell such things as haue no being: and such also as be inordinat, maymed, or imperfit, as neither shapened by forme, nor quickened with lyuing spirite. By meanes wherof thou art mightyly endebted O my Soule. For thou haste receiued

much, & of thy selfe thou hadst nothing: & for all these things thou hast no meane to make recõpence, but only to loue. For that which is giuen by loue, no way better then by loue may againe be requited. And this by loue thou hast also receiued.

But now will I begin to tell the how much this thy Spouse, who appeared so excellent when he created thee, vouchedsafe to bee humbled, when hee repayred thee. And yet notwithstãding, he that in creating thee, seemed so excellent & high, & that in repayring thee semed so lowly, is no lesse wonderful in the latter worke then hee was in the former. In the former he mightely gaue great thinges vnto thee, and in the latter hee mercifullye sustteyned sharpe thinges for thee. For to the ende that he myght aduance thee again to that, from the which thou wast fallen, he disdained not to descend hither where thou art, and that it myght fullye be restored to thee which thou hadst lost, hee was willinge to suffer that whiche thou didst deserue. He descended therefore, vndertooke, suffered, ouercame, and restored. He descended to mortallitye, he

toke

toke vpon him freylty: he suffered paine ouercame death, and restored man. Behould these thinges, O thou my Soule, and be astonished at these so great wonders, and at these benefits, exhibited for thy sake. Consider how much he loued thee, that vouched safe to doo so much, & so manye thinges for thee. Thou wast beutyfull by his gyfte, and thou became foule through thyne own iniquitie: Againe, thou were cleansed and purified by his mercy, his loue yet working on euerye syde to helpe thee. In tymes past, when thou were not, he loued to create thee, when thou were foule and yl fauored, he loued to beutyfie thee. And finally, to shew thee of his loue the feruency, hee woulde delyuer thee from death, by none other meanes, then by dying for thee. And all to vtter therin not so much the benefit of his mercy, as the great vehemency of his charity and loue.

With great bounty therfore hath this louing Creator, poured the breath of life into the first Man his creature, but with muche more loue hath hee, for that selfe Man and creature, geuen and bestowed

not

not his goodes, but him selfe. Greatly then doth this set forth Gods goodnes towardes me, that I am his workmanship: but much more doth this cõmend it, that he made hym selfe the price of my redemption. The rather, bicause that my redemption was wyth so royall a price performed, that man therein might seme a prisoner, not vnfyt by God to be raũsomed. O happy fault of myne, for the purging of the which, while my Soueraigne Lord is drawen with that loue & affection, his loue is opened and reuealed vnto me, greatly longing and coueting to peruse the same. For I should neuer haue knowen hys loue so fullye, had not my great perils, proportioned myne experience accordingly. O how happelye therefore fell I: that after my fall, was rayled againe more happelye. Ther is no lone greater, no zeale purer, no charitie hollyer, no affection feruenter, then that an Innocent vouched safe to dye for me, finding in me no cause to loue or to fauour me. Tell me therefore O Lord, what it is that thou hast so loued in me, and so dearelye loued, that thou

thou wouldest needes dye for me? what hast thou found in me of that qualitie or nature, that might make thee to be wylling to suffer for me such crueltie? All all is pure Loue!

¶ The seuenth Chapter.

¶ Of the benefite of God in callyng vs to the fayth.

AND thou my Soule, to thend thou mayest behold thys loue more perfectlye, and ioy in it more aboundantlye, ponder with thy selfe how many and how worthy in comparison of thee, are left, forlorne, refused, and vtterlye cast awaye, that coulde neuer attayne to the grace which thou hast geuen vnto thee. Surely thou hast heard say, that from the beginning of the world to this day, many generations haue passed, all the which without the knowledge of God, and the price of their redemption, are fallen into the lappes of euerlastyng destruction. And hereby appeareth that thy redemer preferred thee before them all, when hee gaue thee his grace so frankly and freelye, which none of them all could get or come

All all is of Grace.



come by: and yet why thou were taken
and chosen before them, or why he dealt
with thee more louingly then wyth thē,
thou canst finde in thy selfe no cause, but
onely the mere loue of thy merciful Sa-
uiour. Thy Spouse therefore, thy Lo-
ner, thy God and thy Redeemer, hath
both chosen, & forechosen thee. He hath
chosen thee I say in all, and hath taken
thee from among all; and hath loued thee
in all, and called thee also by hys owne
name, that the remembraunce and me-
moriall of him might remaine with thee
for euer. He woold haue thee partaker
of his name, and partaker of the truth of
his name, bycause hee hath annoynted
thee with that selfe oyle of gladnes, with
the which him selfe was annointed, that
of the anointed thou mightest be anoin-
ted, bycause that of Christ thou art called
a Christian.

But were thou stronger, were thou
wyser, were thou nobler, or were thou
ritcher then they all, in that thou hast at-
chiued this speciall grace ouer, abone, &
before them all? How manye strong,
how many wyse, how many noble, how
many

manye ritch were there, in those dayes, and yet all they forsaken, haue perished euery one: highly therfore, hast thou stād in his fauoure, and greate I confesse is the bountye which he hath extended towardes thee. For when thou wast foule and polluted, deformed also, and miserably defiled, ragged and torne, ougsome, and grysely, and as one that was fulfylled of lothsomnes, and enormity, so God thy Lord loued thee, ẏ with all the giftes of his grace hee vouched safe to enritche thee. Take this therefore for an absolute resolution, that excepte thou endeuour with great and earnest study, to adorne and decke thy selfe, & to recouer thy first comelines and decency, thou shalt neuer be thought meete to be brought into the Bride chamber of thy spouse, that is glorious celestial and heauenly. Now therfore, while thou hast tyme, & opportunity, trym and dresse thy selfe O my Soule, kembe vp thy foreheade, facion thy face, frame thine attyre, fret of thy freckles, rub of thy warts, wash away thy spots, smoth thy wrinkles, be all handsome and cleanlye, amend thy behauiour, and with

all thy might, and mayne, set all thinges in good order, that thou maist be accepted of so louinge a Spouse. Prepare thy selfe I say, as becommeth the Bryde of him that is immortall, and as besemeth the Spouses of a Kyng celestial.

¶ *The eyght Chapter.*

¶ Of the gift of vertues.

KNow this also O my Soule, that thou haste wherewith to decke, and adorne thy selfe, & yet that thou shouldeste not haue of thy selfe, if God did not geeue it thee. For of him thou haste receiued the vesture, and garment of good workes, with the fruict of almes, fasting and praier, besides diuers other vertues, wherewith thou maist be garnished, trymd, and made gorgious, as with a robe of variable, freshe, and sundrye colours. And leaste thou shouldest fayle in any poynt, he hath bountefully bestowed vpon thee what so euer is knowen partinent to health, or refection: And what so euer maye repayre comelines, or increase thy beuty. From the which how plenteous

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ſtoꝛe, and diſtribution, pꝛeſenteth it ſelfe vnto thee on al ſydes, I pꝛay thee be aduiſed diligently to thinke on. Thou haddeſt nothing, and much was geuen thee, that was geuen thou hadſt loſt, & it was reſtoꝛed vnto thee, whereby thou art aſſured, that thou ſhalt neuer be left deſtitute, but in ſuch ſoꝛt rather, as thou ſhalt haue many folde occaſion to know, and to ſee, how entirely he loueth thee, that is thy Paramour. He is loth, my Soule to loſe thee, and that is the cauſe why he awayteth thy loyalty with ſuch patience and long ſufferaunce, geuing thee leaue, and liberty, accoꝛdinge to the multitude of his mercye ſo often to repent thee, as thou cõmitteſt any folly. And now recoꝛde & call to memoꝛy, how many maye be foũd which with thee haue receiued al that I haue recited, and yet haue not wt thee obtained that fauour in thẽ, to haue renued what ſoeuer they haue impaired. Which beinge conſidered, thou haſte inſt cauſe to thinke, that thou art yet loued moꝛe then they al: foꝛ that the things by thee loſt, are ſo beningly reſtoꝛed, which to them, by thẽ loſt, are ſo ſtrictly denied.

For thou by his grace & bounty wer neuer denied to worke wel & wisely. Therfore if thou redely do great things, thou art mercyfullye aduaunced, and if thou hardly do small thinges, thou art worthely humbled. For he knoweth what is good for thee, better then thy selfe doest, and therefore if thou wylt haue a good & dutyfull opinion of him, vnderstand and conceiue, that whatsoeuer he doth to thee is both good, and well done. Such is the loue of God towardes vs, that the infirmitie of man endureth nothing, but that by his goodnes is disposed to our profit. Perhaps thou hast not the grace of strength to do vertues, but whilest thou art shaken with the suggestion of vyces, thou art made more strong in thyne humilitie. For weakenes with humilitye hath a better sauour in the presence of God, then pride of mynde hath with the strength of vertue. Be not therefore so bold or malapert, as any wai to presume to preiudice Goddes disposition, but alwaies with feare and reuerence addresse thy praiers to God, that he may vouchsafe to helpe thee, as he knoweth it most

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fyt and expedient for thee. And that if as yet any euyl remain in thee, he may mercifully redresse it, and that if anye goodnes begun in thee, be not yet finished, he may bountifully accomplish it, and finally conduct and bring thee to him selfe, by such way as he him selfe best lyketh.

¶ The. ix. Chapter.

¶ Of the gyft of vnderstanding and knowledge.

NOw tel me O my soule, what recompence shall we make to the Lord, for all the goodnes that we haue receiued of him? For hee hath not contented hym selfe to geue vs onely those good things which he hath geuen to others & the residue of his creatures, but he hath also prouided that in our afflictions we may feele and taste of his loue towardes vs, and therby take occasion singularly, and that as well in all our aduersities, as prosperities, to embrace his kyndnes in ỹ armes of our loue. Saye we therefore in our selues, & vse we this meditacion: Lord thou hast geuen vs the grace to knowe thee,

thee, and more then to other creatures, thou haste disclosed and opened thy secretes vnto vs, by framing our vnderstandyng to conceaue thy hydden misteries. Other our Equals, Mates, and companions, as well in age, as dignitye, thou hast left lyinge in ignorannce, and the darknes of infidelity, but to vs thou haste showen the lyght of thy grace, veritie and truth, more then to other of Adams children. For vnto vs thou haste geuen, capable sence, easy vnderstanding fast memory, strength in working, grace in conuersion, mayntenaunce in prosperity, profit in study, wyt in conceyts, cõfort in aduersity, and which way soeuer we tourne, thy grace and thy mercy doth preuẽt and go before vs. For right often my Soule, when as to oure selues we semed vtterly wast and consumed, he did sodainly relieue vs, when we wandred and went astray, he brought vs into the way, when we were ignorant, he taught vs, when we were sad, he did comfort vs, when we were fallen, he did reare vs vp, and when we stoode, he did hold and stay vs from falling. Finally he gaue vs

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the grace more verelye to knowe hym, more purely to loue him, more sincerely to beleue in him, and more feruently to follow him, then he gaue it to any other of his creatures.

Therefore O Lord my God, the swetenes of my lyfe, the lyght of myne eyes, what recompence shall I make thee for all that thou hast done for me? Wilt thou that I shal loue thee, then teach me how, and how greatly I shall do it. For who am I, that I may loue thee, my strength my Lord, my stedfastnes, my refuge, and my deliuerance: my God, my helper, my defender, the horne of my saluation, and my maintainer, what shall I say more? but my Lord, and my God.

¶ The .x. Chapter.

¶ Of God his prouident care ouer vs.

For manifolde & innumerable are the good thynges which thou hast done for me, O lord my God, and of them to think and to speake shall it alwaies be swecte, and pleasant vnto me: the rather if thou Lord shalt make me thankfull, that I may

may praise, and loue thee for all thy benefites. Loe my Soule, thou hast nowe thy pledge, and thy pledge doth manifest & shew forth thy Spouse. Keepe it therfore vntouched, keepe it vndefiled, keepe it vnpolluted, kepe it safe, kepe it whole, keepe it cleane, keepe it sounde. For albeit thou were sometime defiled, thou art nowe made honest, and a Virgin againe, according to the naturall operatiõ of his loue, which wonteth to restore puritie to the corrupted, and in them that ar pure, to kepe chastity vnspotted. Occupy therefore thy cogitacion, & alwaies busy thy self in thinking how mercifully he hath dealt with thee, & therin ponder how greatlye hee loueth thee, in that hee neither suffereth his benefit to be wanting vnto thee, nor thee to be ignoraunt how diuersly thou enioyest it. And this say I to thee, because that so often as I note or marke the course of his mercy, it seemeth to mee that God doth nothyng els, (if I may so saye) but onely prouide for my saluation. For I see him so wholy occupied, and busyed in keping of me, as if he had forgotten all other thynges,

onely

onely to attende me: so continuallye is God present with mee, so continuallye doth he offer him selfe ready for me, that which way soeuer I turne me, he neuer forsaketh me: wheresoeuer I become, he neuer goeth from me: whatsoeuer I do, he doth still assist me. Finally he is the perpetuall beholder of all my doinges, and so much as may beseeme, or become his goodnes, as an vnseperable workeman together with me, he stãdeth by me, and doth not onely help, and set forward what wanteth in me, but also pacientlye perfiteth theffect of his workemanship. And hereby it appeareth, that albeit hys face cannot yet be sene of vs, his presẽce notwithstandinge is euermore with vs. But what is the pleasãt thing trow you which while I thinke on hym, is wonte not onely to touch me, but also so effectually and sweetely to affect me, that euen presently me thinkes, I am distraict frõ my self, & both drawen and caried hence, but God knowes I woot not whether. Forsooth this it is, that I am altogether altered, and chaunged into an other, and a new creature, and feele my selfe in such

felicity, as I cannot expresse. My conscience is cleared with ioy and solace, all the wretchednes and miseries of my sorowes forepast, are vtterly forgotten & blotted out of memory. My mynde reioyceth, myne vnderstandyng is made bryght, my hart also is lightned, & with longing made ioyfull and pleasant. And now I know not how I see my selfe in an other countrye, and as it were in the armes and bosome of loue I inwardlye hold and embrace, but what I wot nere. And while I labour with all my might continually to keepe it, and neuer to lose it, my Soule wrestleth after a pleasaunt maner, as loth to forgo, that so faine it would haue. And as if it had found ther in the ende of all desires, it highly & vnspeakeablye aduaunceth it selfe for ioye, seeking none other thing, nor desyring any more, but alwaies wel willing to be as it is. And is not this now thinke ye, that most louing and louelye Spouse? Yes verelye, this is that my Lord and God which visiteth me, and yet cõmeth vnto me inuisibly, secrete, and incomprehensible: This is he, which commeth to

touche

touche me, and not to bee seene of mee: which commeth to admonish me, & not to be comprehended: which cõmeth not to infuse him selfe wholy into me, but in part to be assayed and tasted of me, and neither fulfilleth my desire, nor geueth the fulnes of his own sacietie.

And this is it that chiefly appertayneth to the earnest of hys betrothyng, that he which in the worlde to come shall geue him selfe vnto thee my Soule, for euer to be seene & possessed of thee: doth now presently geue but a say or a taste, that thou may know here in this worlde, how pleasant thou shalt finde hym and feele him in his kingdome. And therefore it behoueth thee my Soule, yea and standeth with thy dutye, highly to loue thy God, that so diuersly hath benefited thee.

¶ The .xi. Chapter.

¶ Of the gift of the senses, and of the preseruation of lyfe.

BVt to the end thou mayest be the more kyndled wyth the fire of loue, diligently consider whither thy spouse haue

endued thee with any moe benefits then those already recited. For if he haue, thou art the moze bounden both foz them recited, and foz them that thou shalt receue hereafter, to shew thy selfe obedient and dutyfull, and to gene him thankes from the bottom of thine hart. For I vnderstand that my God is dearelye to be loued of me, foz that well vsing the transgression of my Parents, he hath created me of their flesh, and hath breathed into me the spirite of lyfe, seperating me frō them whych were bozne befoze theyr tyme, oz that beyng suffocated in their mothers wombe, semed to be conceaued not to lyue in this wozld, but to dye. I haue therefoze receaued of him, not only to be, but also to be man, and therto haue also attayned the vnderstauding, what difference there is betwene me & a beast. I haue I saye, receaued the shape of my body, and in my bodye the distinction of senses, myne eyes to see, myne eares to heare, my nose to smell, my handes to feele, my mouth to tast, my fete to walk, and that moze is then them al, the healthy of them all. And albeit these are great

thinges.

thinges, yet serueth this to augmẽt those benefites, that to the seuerall delyght of euerye seuerall sence, God hath created thinges consonant and agreable: as many thinges brightly shining, many melodiously sounding, many pleasantlye sauering, many swetely tasting, and many delectable in feeling. For the prouidence of the Creatour, to this vse & purpose hath geuen to thinges, such diuers and variable qualities, that euerye sense of man might haue wherin to be delighted. In as much as the sight conceaueth one thyng, the hearing an other thing, the smelling an other, the taste an other, the feeling an other. The beuty of coulours fedeth the eye, the harmonye of musicke pleaseth the eare, the fragrancye of sauour delighteth the nose, the sweete verder and reales contenteth the taste. And who is able to reherse, or to recken vp all the delightes of the senses, which are so manyfold, that if any man should consider eche one in his kinde, eche one should seeme wonderfull, and straungely enritched. How manye pleasures to the eyes shew we forth in colours, how

many

many to the eare heare we, in diuerſitie of ſounds, by the which men cõmunicat their mindes and meaninges mutually, tell of thinges paſt, demonſtrate the preſent, pronoſticate thynges to come, and reueale things hidden, priuy and ſecret: So that if the lyfe of man ſhoulde want them, it might be compared to the rudenes and brutiſhnes of beaſtes.

What neede I tell you of the warbling of Birdes, the pleaſant melodye of mens voices, or the harmony of muſicke in the diuerſitie of tunes: For there are moe kyndes of conſent and concorde in Muſicke, then thought can conceaue, or ſpeeche expreſſe, all the which notwythſtanding do ſerue the eare, as thynges create and made to that vſe & purpoſe. And as I haue examplified the delyght of the eare, ſo may you conceaue ỹ pleaſures of taſte and feeling, being as pleaſant and as manyfolde as are the other. This therefore by no meanes maye bee gaynſaide, but that the goodnes of God in theſe is exceedyng wonderfull: But yet is this to be added, ſo much the more to his glory, as it is our greater benefit,

for

for my God hath not only made my body, and beutified the same with diuersitie such as is before mencioned, but hath also made it healthy and sounde: that I might neither be noysom to my frends, nor a reproch among straungers. Neyther is this the whole that I haue receiued, for I am also indued wyth reason, which can vnderstande and conceaue the veritie in euerye thing, and can discerne right from wrong, and good from euyll: and can search for my Creatour, long for and desire him, & that finallye can prayse him, and be cõtented to abide with hym. But if I shal confesse a further truth vnto ye, nothyng is all thys, in respect of this benefit: namely that it hath pleased my God so to dispose of me, that I shuld be borne, bred and fostered in such a time and season, and in and among such men, and such people, as professing his fayth, and vsing his Sacramentes, may teache and instruct me to beleue, and liue accordingly. For this I see denyed to an infinite sort of men, which I glory and reioyce to be graunted vnto me: And yet with the other by all ryght shoulde my

state

state be all one, alike, and equall. They are forsaken through God hys iustice, & I am called by Gods mercy and grace. I wyll yet nowe proceede and go somewhat further, namely in the contemplation of his further benignitie, in that my Parentes haue brought me vp in suche state and safetye, that the fire hath not burnt mee, nor the water drowned mee, nor the Deuil possessed me, nor Beastes deuoured me, nor any fall or mischaunce hath caught or destroyed me, but that I am growen vp to competent age to professe my faith in Gods loue and fauour.

¶ The .xii. Chapter.

¶ Of the pacience and long suffering of God.

GReat therefore is the pity, and infinite is the mercy (O Lord my God) which thou hast vsed towardes me. And albeit that thou art in all thy workes wonderfull, yet art thou thought most marueylous in the bowels of thy loue. For thou despisest no man, thou reiectest no man, thou abhorrest no man, but onelye suche one

one as madly abhorreth, witlesly lotheth or dreadfully doth forsake thee. These are therefore thy giftes, O Lorde, these are thy ritches, these are thy treasures, with the which thou hast endued me in the multitude of thy mercy: namely, that thou hast sundry and often times deliuered me, when I was in daunger, & that in my synnes thou hast neyther left nor forsaken me, but that when I was vnmyndfull, thou dydst put me in remembraunce of thee: when I was turned frō thee, thou diddest call me back vnto theer & when I came to thee, thou didst gently receue me, and when I repented, thou didst mercifully pardon me. For not onlye the synnes which I committed, but those also which by thy protection I eschewed and escaped, within compasse of thy pardon are benignly conteyned. And as I fel into many synnes and offences, so if thou hadst not saued me, into farre many moe had I fallen and runne headlong. But I well remember me, that by three special meanes thou didst preserue me, from doing the wickednes which otherwise I had done: that is, by with-

drawing the occasion, in strengthening me in resisting, and by keeping and continuing me in the soundnes of affection. For if occasion had bene left at libertye, manifold are the offences which I shuld haue incurred. But so great was the mercye of my Lord and God towardes me, that no such opportunitie could arrest or hold me. And with much ado had I bene stayed from the doubling of myne iniquity, the violence of temptation ther to so greuously vrging, as euerye man hath feeling in his owne frailtie: hadst not thou my Lord, with strength assisted me, not onelye to vanquish my lust and appetite, & to treade vnder my feete my fleshly desire, but also to withdrawe my consent from the concupiscence, whych would haue forced me to fulfyl the longing and liking which I felt in my members. But from certain synnes O Lord, thy fauour and indulgence stirred with pity, dyd so far estraunge me, that I vtterlye abhorred them in my hart, and so hated, and loathed the fylth of their iniquitie, that no suggestion of the same had might or power to touch me. Neyther is

this

this O Lord, the least point of thy pity, nor the meanest token of thy goodnes & bounty: that notwithstanding the hugenes of mine iniquity (wretch that I am) and notwythstandyng that I haue vnkindly kindled thee, and by doing euyll in thy sight, prouoked thy furye, stirred vp thy mood, and deserued thy wrath against me: notwithstanding I saye, that I haue greuously synned, thou of thy mercy hast pacientry suffered, & euen yet doest forbeare to punish my wyckednes.

For if I repent, thou pardonest me, & if I retourne, thou receiuest mee. And while I differre to repent, by presumption or securitye, thou doest pawse in thy patience, and gently tariest for me. When I wander thou doest waifte me into the way of thy verity: againe when I striue or resist, thou doest vanquish, & conquer me. When I loyter, or linger in the leases of fantasy, thou doest either prick me forward, or louingly stay for me. Whē I reuert to thy wayes to walke in thy pathes, and to trace thy foote steppes, thou doest forth with receaue, and courteously embrace me. When I am ignorant, ỹ

doest teache, and instructe me: when I mourn or lament, thou doest calme & cõfort me: when I fall or stumble, thou doest stay and reare me vp: when I am in decaye, thou doest repayre me: when I craue or aske, thou geuest largely: whẽ I seke thee, I fynde thee: when I knock, thou openest vnto me. Finally thou art my loadsman to good lyfe, my staffe, and staye to walke by, so as I neither want wyll nor cunning through thy gyfts, and grace to walke directly in thy way. And this also O Lord is worthy of admiration, that not onely in my youth, before I was able to aske or had discretion to desire or know, but also in myne age, when I was able throughe thee, to aske, and craue of thee, when I coulde seeke thee, when I could desire thee, when I could rest in thy mercye, and cleaue faste vnto thee, of thy free grace and bountye thou gauest me many gifts, & then also when I neither craued, nor sought, nor desired them, but retchlesly, and carelesly set all at naught. But yet I esteme this as the greatest benefite which thou haste bestowed vpõ me, that thou gaue to me thine

Aungels

Angels, to garde and to keepe me from the daye of my birth, tyll the day of my death. The contemplation wherof constrained not onely a certaine holy father to say: That great is the dignitie of the Elect, whyche haue for their Gardians God his holy Angels, but the wyse man also to confesse that the Soules of the righteous are in the hand of God. Sapi. 3.

Neither cease I here to commend thy pity, sithens with such patience thou hast borne mine offences. For I rather think my selfe bound to double thy prayse, and to geue thee thankes with all my might: For as muche as thou hast not requited me according to my synfulnes, nor suffered the earth to swallow me, nor fire frō heauen to touche me, nor lyghtening to burne me, nor the riuers to drenche me, nor any other paine, perill, death, or destruction (as I haue well deserued) to trouble or afflict me. For when by synne I went away from thee, I not onely deserued thine anger and indignation, but iustlye also prouoked eche creature of thine to maligne me. And no marnayle, for if any mans thrall or seruant do run from

from his Maister, he doth not onelye ex-asperate his Maister against him, but al-so all his seruantes, friendes, and fami-lye. Therfore when I displeased thee O Lord my God, Creatour of me, and of al thinges being, I iustly for myne offence moued euery creature to bee offended at me. So that if the whole world should for thy sake conspire to fight against me, or any way els to molest or trouble me, I haue no cause to complaine that I suf-fered wrong or iniurye. For the earth might say vnto me, I ought not to beare thee, but rather to swallowe thee, in as muche as thou hast not bene afeard to fall from my Creator, and to ioyne with his aduersary the Deuil, the authour of disobedience, synne, and iniquity. The Sunne also might vse this language: I ought not to shine, nor geue light to thy health, safety or saluation, but in reuenge of my Lordes quarell, who is both light it selfe, and of light the fountaine, vtter-lye to hyde from thee the beames of my beuty. And thus might euery creature els, controle and taunt me, & thus might they wreake thier Creators iniury, if he

who

who created them, did not also restraine them, as not willing the death of a synner, but that he should turne, repent him and lyue. It behoueth me therefore O Lord, to be the more humbled vnder thy mighty hand, and to shew my selfe vnto thee so much the more thankfull, obedient, and loyall, as thy great benefites exact and require I should bee: least that differring the punishment of my transgression, thou chasten me at thy dreadful comming so much the more greuously, as thou hast awaited my dutye with patience. And thou my Soule, perswade thy selfe I pray thee, that the long suffering of God hath now long time expected the effect of the election of his predestination, which he wyl haue fulfilled in vs, through the excessiue loue which hee hath borne and doth beare vs. For this is the cause why the Lord hath paciently waited, and enclined vnto mee, and that he hath turned his eyes from my sinnes, as vnwilling to see howe often I haue offended him. This is the cause I saye, why hee hath dissembled, that he myght commend his patience, and confirme his

loue.

loue. For this cause, as I well remember me, he stroke my hart, and stirred it vp to beholde the scarres of myne owne synnes, and to feele the great griefe and sorenes of the same. And for this cause he lead and conueyed me to the gates of hell, and to the paynes and tormentes prouided for the wicked. And to the end that no hurtful consideration of my sins might remaine within me, he enspired into me a better comfort, and gaue not only hope of remission, but also a full and perfect pardon. And so fully did he pardon mee, that neither reuenge can condemne me, nor vpbraiding confound me, nor imputing diminish his zeale or loue towardes me. Yet there be some in the world, and those no small many, that in such sort pardon iniurie, as though they reuenged it not, & yet they cast it in the teeth. And other there be also, that albeit they be silent, hold their tounges, and say nought, yet they reserue the malice in the bottom of their stomake, and vnder the cloke of silence hide spite and rancour. But neither of these sortes pardoneth according to ỹ rules of Gods loue

and

and charitye. And therefore very farre from these differeth the most mercyfull nature of God: which alwaies dealeth plainly, and pardoneth and forgeueth so fully and freely, that the constant fayth of the synners that do repent their sins, and forethinke their offences, may wyth Paules wordes be comforted, that wher aboundance of synne was, there grace is more plentifull. witnes saint Peter, who after he had thrise denied his Maister, by a tripple commaundement was of Christ his Church made a Shepheard and Pastor. Saint Paule also of an enemie and persecutor of the Gospell, was made a vessel of election, and a teacher of the Heathen. Euen as Mathew of a tole gatherer was made an Apostle, and the first in the new testament that wrote any Gospell.

Roma. 5.

Iohn. 18.

Iohn. 21.

Actes. 8. 9.

Math. 9.

¶ *The .xiii. Chapter.*

¶ Of the gift of continencie.

BVt after all theese thynges which are right many as you see, God also gaue mee the gift of continencie, Conti-

nencie I meane, not onely from carnalitie, but also from all other vices, what soeuer they be called. So that I, who in former tyme coulde scantlye forbeare a thyng three dayes together, can nowe through Gods helpe forbeare it for euer. And thereby finde occasion right iustlye to say, that he that is mighty, hath done great thinges for mee. But some man perhaps thinketh, that continencie is a matter of ease, and light of importance. But so thinke not I, I wyll ensure you, for I knowe what enemies it hath, and of what might they be, and therfore how needeful it is for it to be kurdy & strong to resist and withstand suche a broode of impiety.

Luke. 1.

The first and chiefe enemy that continency hath, is our owne flesh, whilest it lusteth and coueteth agaynst the spirite. And what a familiar enemy is this to you? Or how perilous is the conflict that groweth hereby? Or how secrete & how sore is the fight like to be, wher the enemy hath such might and opportunitye to hurt? Truly my Soule, this foe is most daũgerous, most sterne, most cruel, most vnna-

vnnaturall and tirannous. Neither is ther any way to flee, or to escape her, nor any meanes or policy to put her to flight but maugre our heades we must beare her about vs, because she is euer lynked and tyed vnto vs. And therefore what is more perilous, wretched or miserable, then to be not onelye forced to feede and sustaine her, but also to be prohibited to do her hurt or harme? Thou seest then what neede thou hast, carefullye to beware and to kepe thy selfe from that foe, whom thou sufferest to sleepe in thyne own lappe and bosome. But well were thee (my Soule) hadst thou none other enemie, or if this one were al, thou were thrise happy and fortunate. But alas the while, ther is one other as stout, sturdy, cruel, daungerous, & hurtful as she, & as hard also to be escaped, whersoeuer thou doest bestow thy selfe. For he doth enuiron and compasse thee round about. And which way soeuer thou conuert or turne thee, he is ready and at hand to assault & encounter thee. This enemy is this present wicked world, which by fiue gates, which are thy fyue senses, woūdeth thee

with his dartes, and shifteth in death at thine own wyndowes.

The third is that common aduersarye sworne deadlye foe, to all Adams posteritie, that old subtile Serpent I meane, which is more crafty and wylye then all other creatures either ar or can be. This enemy is he, whom no eye can discerne, & therefore to auoyde him, passeth mans abilitie. For sometime he assaulteth vs openly, and violently, sometime he stealeth on vs secretlye and guilefullye, and alwaies continueth his cruelitie and malice, seekyng to oppresse vs by myght, sleight, or pollicie. And who is able to endure all this? Or who is fyt to encoũter this Champion? Verely no man, but hee that hath loued vs, and that by hys triumphãt death hath atchiued this victorie for vs. Thou maiest therfore know O my Soule, howe hard & difficult it is to be continent, and what God geueth to make it easy for vs. And therby the more entirely to loue him for assisting vs with his grace, when we shoulde otherwyse faynt through our own frailty & weakenes. For onely in the Lord haue we this

power

power and might, to withstand the force of this tripple batterye, mayntayned against vs with suche force and violence. And he it is, and none other but he, that confoundeth thy foes, and all them that trouble thee. It is onely God I say that treadeth vnder foote for vs, not onelye our flesh, & all our fleshly concupiscence, but also the world wyth all worldly vanities: and finally the Deuil with al his wicked suggestions. Haue not I therefore iust cause to confesse, that hee that is mighty hath done great thynges for me: *Luke. 1.*

¶ The .xiiii. Chapter.

¶ Of the gift of hope.

BVt yet moreouer, our God and Sauiour hath geuen mee the grace so to conforme my selfe to hys wyll by obedience, that I am fully assured through faith in his promise, that finally I shall enioy his kyngdome and blysse. And this grace consisteth in three especiall poiutes: The detestation and hate of my synnes forepast, the contempt & disdaine

daine of present pleasures, & the desire & longing after the ioyes to come, which to attain he hath geuen me the hope, and supporteth the same by three things also, which strengthen and confirme my hart in marueilous sort, and so animate and encourage me, as no want of woorkes, nor lacke of merites, nor consideration of priuate commodities, nor deepe estimation of the heauenly blisse shalbe able to cast me downe frō the tower of hope, but that my Soule therein shall be rooted for euer. And if ye long to knowe what thynges these are, they are these that followe.

First I consider the loue of hym that adopted me: Secondly the truth of him that dyd promise mee: And thirdlye, the might of him that redeemed me. Now therfore let my fleshly thoughtes repine and murmour as them list, and say: who art thou? or how great is heauens ioy? or by what merites doest thou hope to attaine it? For I wyll confidently answer, I know in whom I haue beleued, and am fully assured, and wholy resolued, that God in hys soueraygne loue hath

hath chosen and adopted me, and that he is true in his promises, and able to performe them: and that he may do in heauen, and in earth, whatsoeuer hee wyll. And for these merites ought I to loue my God and sauiour. For it is the working of great grace and mercy, that whē I flee frō God, he doth folow me: when I feare to come nye him, hee doth allure me: when I despaire, hee doth recomfort mee: when I am vnthankfull, hee doth styll benefit mee: when I commit vncleanes, hee doth clense me: when I delight in vanities, hee sheweth me hys truthes: whē I lye bound in the bonds of vnsoluble wickednes, and custome of euil, he loseth me frō them, setteth me at libertie, and finally from the world, doth draw me to his kingdome.

¶ The .xv. Chapter.

¶ Of God his bountie, of our iniquity, and of thankes geuing.

BVt yet now (my Soule) behold & consider those gifts of gods goodnes, which are onelye knowen to thy selfe: As ẅ how gladsome and comfor-

comfortable chere Christ offereth hym selfe vnto thee, renouncing the world, & with what delicates hee refresheth thy hunger, and with what store of mercy he doth enritch thy pouertie. What secrete affections he doth enspire into thee, and with how pleasant a cup of loue he doth make thee merrye, when thou folowest his pathes, forsaking things transitory. Is it a thing small, trowest thou, vyle or contemptible, that of his onelye & mere mercy he calleth thee a fugitiue, thrall, & rebell, from thy restles gadding, to hys setled home, and plentyfullye refresheth thee with spirituall consolation? For if thou were tempted, he sustained thee: if thou were in daunger, he relieued thee: if thou wer sorowful, he comforted thee: if thou were wauering, he dyd confirme thee. How often also were thou ready to wyther away for feare, when he louingly stoode by to cherish thee? And when to quenche thy drouth, hee infused hym selfe into thee? Neither canst thou forget how often with his spirituall lyght he clered thine vnderstãding, sense, reason, and feeling, when thou wer singing

or rea-

or reading any spiritual thing. And yet in thy memory it is rise also, how often when thou were in praier, hee rauished thee with vnspeakeable desire from all thinges that are earthlye, to delight thy selfe in the pleasure of that euerlasting and heauenly Paradise. I leaue here to speake of the great woorkes of mercye, which it pleased his Maiesty to doo, and woorke by mee, least anye part of that praise, honor and glory, which is onelye his own, should any way seeme to be ascribed to me. For in the iudgement of man the grace of the geuer, and the felicitie of the receauer, seeme so vnited and knit together, that he is not onely praysed, who is onely prayse worthye, but he also commended, whom God in hys woorkes doth make but his instrument. And the receauer made partner of the praise with the geuer, which to the glory of God is not a lyttle iniurious. For what hath any man that he hath not receiued? why then is he praised that hath freely receaued, for that in the which hee hath nothing deserued? To thee therefore O my God, be all laud, glory, praise

1. Cor. 4.

and thankesgeuing, but to me thy creature shame and confusiō, that haue done so much euil, and receiued so much good. Se now therfore O my Soule, that not onely Gods bountye, but also our own iniquitie doth highly commend the loue of God towards vs. For if this be great liberalitie, to geue muche to them that haue deserued nothing, how greatly shal or ought that goodnes to bee esteemed, that requiteth thē with good, who haue merited euil? O what loue is this which no wickednes or iniquity is able to ouercome? Some thinges there bee whych God mercyfully pardoneth, other there be which he bountifully geueth. For he pardoneth our vices, and geueth vs his vertues, alwayes as readye to forgeue, as to geue: being on the one side louing, and on the other syde liberal.

Let vs therefore confesse our syns vnto hym: Let vs I saye confesse that we haue our sinnes from our selues, that he maye pardon them, & our vertues from him, that he maye continue and encrease them. And let vs endeuour without all cealyng, that wee appeare neyther vnthank-

thankfull for that which he pardoneth, neither yet vnmyndefull of that which he geueth. This I say let him endeuour that beleueth in God, or earnestlye desyreth to be his louer. For true loue neyther hideth nor dissembleth anye thyng. What therfore worketh the diligent consideration of all these thinges, but marueilously to withdraw the mynde of the louer from all other loue to loue God alone, who hath geuen all this? But if any man conceaue that God hath geuen vnto him what soeuer is forsayde, and doubteth not yet to loue him but lyghtly, let him be assured that ther is no man but that if he seeke, he may finde occasiō why to thinke him selfe to God most beholding, and with all his power most diligently to thanke him, whyle lyfe and breath shall prolong his daies. He therfore who wanteth any thing necessary to further hys soule health, ought neyther to murmour against God; nor to accuse him. For he doth all thynges vpon iust occasion, diligent deliberation, and aduised iudgement, & hath mercy on whom he wyl, iudgeth whom he wyll, and har-

deneth whom hee wyll. And is able not oncly to gene to whom he wyll, but also to take away from whom he wyl, what, and when best standeth with hys pleasure. Right good is it then, and also fyt and necessary, that he who hath not those thinges which be needeful for him, shuld not onely be sad and sory, but also labour and praye to get and attaine them: And then when he hath gotten them, to shew him selfe grate and thankfull vnto God for them.

¶ The .xvi. Chapter.

¶ Of the benefit of Christ his death and passion.

GReat therefore and many, nay rather infinite & innumerable are the benefites, O Lord my God, which thou hast heaped vpon me: And for them am I bounden euer more, both to loue and prayse thee. For what soeuer goodnes I haue presently, or what soeuer I haue had in times past, or what soeuer I shall haue in time to come, it commeth from thee (thou Authour of al goodnes) frō whom what soeuer is good in deede, or so accompted,

compted, doth issue, flow & procede. But yet one thyng is there, whych more then these all doth inflame, vrge, and moone me, to set my whole delight, and all my loue vpon thee.

This I say specially, O my Lord Iesu, makes thee to me both louinge, and amiable, that thou vouched safe of thy mere mercy, to suffer for me most shamefull and cruell death, in accomplishinge the worke of my redemption. This onelye, this wholly, and this more then all thinges, doth chalenge vnto it, euen by speciall desert, all our lyfe, all our labour all our seruice, and loue. This is yt I say, that better stirreth, swetelyer seketh, and greatlyer encreaseth oure deuotion toward thee, thē all thine other kindnes or goodnes towardes vs. For in this worke of our reconsiliation made by the bytter panges of his passion, the vniuersal creatour was so oppressed with pain and trauayle, that he was nothinge lyke wearied in the workmāship of ỹ whole world. For of the world, and of al things in the world, he onelysayd the worde, and they were made, he gaue the commaun- *Psal. 32.*

dement

dement, and they were created. But for the restauration of man kynd, the paines and the sorowes which he suffered, are in all respects manifolde, maruailous, & vnspeakeable? Behold therfore how he loued vs, that for no neede or necessitye on his owne behalfe, but onelye for the loue which he bare to vs, woulde beare, and sustaine such paines and so meruailous. Iustly therefore haue I sayde, and may I say, that this one thinge excelleth all other his benefites. For though it be greatly to be wayed, and also to be estemed for no small token of bountye, that a man contenteth himselfe, or condescendeth frankly to gyue his goodes to another, yet is this much more and infinitly incomparable to geeue, and be stowe a mans own selfe for his neighbour. And thoughe this bee an argument of greate loue, and charity, to geue a mans lyfe for his friendes: yet is this a plaine proofe of great affection to dye for foes, and enemyes, as the sonne of God did, when he dyed for vs. For whē we were enemies to God, we wer recōciled by the death of
Roma. 5. his sōne, Hardely saith Paul dieth a mā

for

for a iust mã, but he neuertheles dyed for ỹ wycked, the iust for the vniust, that he might present vs blameles in the syght of his father. And from heauen became he exiled and banished, that he might restore vs to the ioyes of that kingdome.

O how vnspeakeable therefore is this loue and charitie? Or what tounge can expresse the sweetenes of thys affection? Or how marueilous a mercye was thys I pray you, that God for man should become man, or that God for man shoulde dye in the flesh? and to be tempted in all thinges belonging to mans infirmitie, synne onely excepted: For behold it shal forthwith appeare to the eye of thine vnderstanding, with how great a raunsom man was redeemed: which by reason of his synne was iustlye enthrauled to the Deuil, and the most dreadfull sentence of death and damnation. Neither is it to be hidden, that if man had not ben raunsomed, accordyng to gods good mercye exhibited in his sonne, with the Deuill & his aungels hee had beene lost for euer. And all this doo I tell thee, that thou mayest haue some feeling how much mã *Hebr. 4.*

is

is bounde to bee louyng to God for al-
thinges: and not onely pacientlye, but al-
so willinglye, and with all the might of
power and feruencye, to abyde and en-
dure sorrow and griefe for him, that suf-
fered for vs such extremitie of griefe and
Actes. 14. sorrow. For by many tribulations must
we enter into the kingdome of god. Let
my Soule therefore (O my Lord Jesu)
hold and embrace thy blessed bodye cru-
cified, and let it drincke a sweete draught
of thy most precious bloud, by deepe im-
printyng of thy passion in my mynde &
memory. Yea let this pleasant remem-
braunce so possesse my memorye, that no
oblivion or forgetfulnes bee able to ab-
scure it. But geue me grace to iudge of
my selfe as Saynt Paule dyd, namelye,
1. Cor. 2. that I know nothing but Christ Jesu, &
him also crucified: so that vayne errour
be not suffered to withdraw me my know-
ledge from the soundnes of faith. Final-
ly let this wonderful loue towardes me
challenge to it selfe all my loue to thee:
that no worldlye desyre haue power to
swalow me. For this I know O Lord,
that the hart or mynde that is fulfylled
with

with the loue of thee, can neyther bee straightned with feare, nor defiled with lust, nor torne with wrath, nor aduaunced with pride, nor wasted with vayne glory, nor styred with madnes, nor vnbowelled with ambition, nor shroonken with couetousnes, nor ouerthrowē with sadnes, nor consumed with enuye, neyther yet corrupted with anye other vice, while in the sweetenes of thee it resteth constant and immoueable. He therfore that to his Seruauntes geueth so great thinges in this world present, how great trow you, doth he reserue for them, and lay vp in store, in the world to come?

The thinges yet that he presently geueth, are temporall, but those which hee promiseth to geue hereafter, are eternal, & incomperably better then all the temporall goods of the world. For temporal goods are painfully gotten, and easely wasted. And when we haue them surest, Lord what a care it is to kepe them, what sorow to lose them, and what endles payne and trauaile to recouer them againe? But the ritches of the world to come, are neuer lost, neuer diminished,

but alwayes possessed with ioy & quietnes, as things euermore longed for, and neuer hated or loathed. For hee that to these heauenly ritches is once aspired, & hath gotten them into hys handes and possession, shall bee as well assured that he shall neuer lose them, as he hath earnest desire neuer to forgo them.

¶ The. xvii. Chapter.

¶ Of the benefit of God his promise.

RIght highly therefore is God to bee loued in his promises, in asmuch as he hath behight vs greater thinges, then hetherto hee hath geuen vs. For hee hath promised vnto vs rest from paine, libertie from thraldome, securitie from feare, comfort from sorrow, resurrection from the dead, and after that our bodyes are rayled vp agayne, suche full and perfect blysse as neuer shall haue ending. Finallye he hath promised him selfe vnto vs, euen as he swarc to our fathers, that hee would geue him selfe for vs. Great therfore are the promises of God & vnspeakable, and for these, and in these will God

Luke. 1.

be loued

be loued of vs: and in such sort and maner as it behoueth vs.

But if thou wylt know in what sort it behoueth vs to loue God, vehementlye to desire to haue the promise performed, is onely the maner that in this our loue is of duty required. The promise of God yet, how soeuer it bee desyred, is muche lesse desired, then it ought for to be. And howe soeuer the Louer of God profiteth, and increaseth in louyng hym, hee ought styll to profite, and to encrease to more. For the earnest and true longyng after God in some respect, hath no mean nor measure, when as it can neuer so exceede, that it maye be thought to muche. And where as in al other thinges impaciencie is euer blamed, vehement impaciencie of the delay in the expectacion of gods promises, that is, to haue and possesse God, deserueth laud and praise, as a thing most commendable. For the more a man loueth God, and the more he longeth after hym, the impaciencie in that delaye tormenteth the more, & the hope which is differred, sore vexeth the soule. But these precious iewels in this world

promised, are onelye had and enioyed in the heauenly palace. And therfore of that good whych is chiefe of all goodnes, what it is, and how it is, shal first be declared.

¶ The .xviii. Chapter.

¶ Of the consideration of the Deity & ioyes of heauen.

LEt vs stirre vp therefore and aduaunce all our vnderstanding, as far forth as the grace of God may assist it, to waigh and consider how great the onelye and proper ioy of the chosen is there, where the place is prepared for them. That is to say, that onely high soueraigne good, which is lyfe, lyght, blysfulnes, wysedome, eternitie, and such other like: and yet is but onelye one in nature most excellent, and high good, sufficing to it self in all thinges, needing or wanting nothing: and which all haue neede of, not onely to be, but also well to be. Thys good is God the Father, thys is the word, that is, the Sonne of the Father, and this is that one and common loue,

to

to the Father and the Sonne, namelye that holy Spirite, which from them both equally doth issue and proceede. And that which euerye one of these is in parson particularly, the same is the whole Trinitie, the Father, the Sonne, & the holye Ghost. For euery singuler parson of this Trinitie, is doubtles nothyng els but that high soueraigne vnitie, of the godhead I meane, and the Deitie, which can neither be multiplied, encreased, nor altered.

Luke. 10.

Moreouer, this is that onely one thing which is needefull and necessarye. And that onely is necessarye, in the which all good is, or which of it selfe is the onelye one, and aloue good. For if eche seuerall good thing, be good and delectable, then thinke with thy selfe how delectable that good is, which containeth in it the pleasure and delight of all that is good, and not suche as wee synde, or taste in Gods creatures, but so far differing in al kinde of excellency, as the Creator in worthynes doth excell the creature. For if lyfe created be good, howe good is that lyfe which did create it? If healthy made, or

geuen

geuen be good, how good is that health that made or gaue it? If the wisedome amiable, that consisteth in ỹ knowledge of thinges ỹ be made, how amiable is ỹ wisedome that made all those things of nothing: Finally, if in things delectable the delight be great and manifold, howe great is the same in him that made, and ordained what soeuer is delectable? O how happye is that Soule, which maye haue vse of that good? what shall hee haue mysse of, that hath it? or what shal he not want, that lackes it? For who so hath that, shall together haue the goodes both of body and soule: and those suche also, so passing and so excellent, as neyther eye hath sene, nor eare hath heard, nor the hart of man hath thought or conceaued. Why then wander we through so manye thinges, to seeke the goodes of our bodie and soule?

1. Cor. 2.

Let vs rather loue that one God in whom is all that good is, and it shall be inoughe and sufficient for vs. Let vs longe after that simple good, which of it selfe is all good, and we shalbe well, and shall nede to seeke no further. For what

louest

loueſt thou O my fleſh, or what deſireſt thou, O my Soule? There and in that ſame ſelfe good, that is: in thy Souereigne Lord God, is doubtles al whatſoeuer ye loue, or deſire. To ſpeake therefore of the goods of the heauenlye kingdome, or to conceaue or vnderſtād them, no man cloathed in the fleſh, ſuffiſeth, or is able. For in truth they are much greater & better, then eyther they are thought or perceyued to bee. For the kingdome of God excelleth all fame, paſſeth all praiſe, ſurmounteth all cunning, & excelleth what ſoeuer glorye is thought moſt royall or famous. The kingdome of god therfore is full of light, and peace, charitye and patience, worſhippe and glory, pleaſure and delight, euerlaſting in ioy, perpetuall in bliſfulnes, and repleniſhed with all other goodes, what ſoeuer are vnpoſſible to bee ſpoken, or comprehended. And yet ought I not therfore to be mute or ſilent, but to ſay ſo muche as I can: Bycauſe I cannot ſaye ſo much as I woulde. For bycauſe we beleue that God is vnſpeakable, it is not forth with reaſon to thincke our ſelues not bounde

to speake of him that we can, or are able. Neyther is this tollerable, ỹ we shoulde not belene of that life euerlasting, which God by his promise hath sealed vnto vs more a great deale, then is sette forth in wryting. For neyther can the toung, nor the pen expresse so much, as the hart can comprehende, and yet the hart which is of greatest capacity, and of al things conceaueth most profoundly, and depely, is farre to light to compryse the Maiesty of God, his ioyes and glory. Of the lyke, to come therefore, we must earnestly belene that it is both euerlasting in it selfe, and euerlastinglye happy: And that ther is assured security, and secure tranquility, peaceable pleasantnes, blysfull eternity, and eternall blisfulnes, wher is perfytte loue, no feare, no dread, no want of day: But cherefull motion, and one spirite among all, assured of the sight of God, & there to abyde in his ioy, where that cyte is, which is the blessed congregation of all Aungels and Saintes, glistering & shyning in the righteousnes of Christ. There I say wher euerlasting saluation aboundeth, where truth reigneth, where

no

no man deceaueth, nor can bee deceaued: where no happye man can bee cast out or exiled, nor whither anye wretch may bee drawen or aduaunced. This is the blysse-full contemplatiue life, to the which such as come by faith fruitfull and charitable, shall be made lyke to the blysseful spirits, and raigne in Gods kingdom with them for euer. For what they beleued here, that shal they see there, and beholding the substance of their Creatour, wyth pure hartes, and innocent eyes, shall triumphe in ioy euerlasting, and through the pos-session of gods loue in mutuall charitie, shall be eche together with other, & ioy-ned with their God in vnitye & concord. And hauing receiued the priuiledge of the heauenlye countrye, as perpetuallye en-fraunchized into the same, shall enioy the benefit long before promised.

There shall be such gladnes, and suche plenty and store of heauenly solace, abou-ding in the fulnes of gods goodnes and grace, that to their Lord god soueraygne geuer of such giftes, they shal incessantly yelde thankes and prayse wythout anye kynde of yrksomnes conceaued, in the v-

sing, or hauing of gods so manyfold blessinges. For the hartes of euery one shall there be open eche to other, as corporall thynges are here sene with the syght of our bodelye eyes. And so perfect and so cleane shall mens consciences bee there, that they shall haue continuall cause to thanke God for their puritie, & not blush nor be ashamed for their former offences, in as muche as neither synner nor synne shall be there, wher power is taken from all men to synne any more. Neither shall they which be perfectly blessed, bee ignorant of anye mysterie or secrete, for they
1. Cor. 13. shall see him in whom all secretes are opened, & that face to face, as them selues are sene. For then shall mankynde in all perfection be made so absolute, that from thence foorth it shall neuer bee altered or chaunged, but of that substance of Man, by glorification transformed into the likenes of his most blessed Maker, al the naturall goodes earst receiued of God, and disfugured by mans synne in this wretched worlde, shall there in that blysse bee repaired to better, that is to say: vnderstanding shall be without errour, memo-

rye

rye without obliuion, thought without wandering, charitie wythout fayning, ſenſe wythout offence, health wythout ſickneſs, myrth without ſorrow, pleaſure without paine, life without death, agility wythout impediment, fulnes wythout lothſomnes, and ſoundnes without dyſeaſe. For whatſoeuer in this life, eyther the violence of beaſtes, or rage of miſfortune hath impaired in mans body, what ſoeuer ſycknes hath feebled, or crueltye waſted, or dyſeaſe putrified, or age in it ſelfe comberſome hath benummed or cõſumed, ſhal all againe in the glorious reſurrection be renued & reſtored, and the whole bodies with all their lymmes and members vnited to their ſoules, ſhall together be endued with incorruptible nature. And therefore who ſoeuer in that blyſſefulnes, is blyſfully poſſeſſed, ſhall by no diſtance of place, difference of merite, nor any other meane what ſoeuer it be, at any tyme bee ſeperated from the full fruition of God, in the fulnes of hys glory.

FINIS.

¶ The table of the matters contained in euery chapter of this booke.

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Errata.

In the first lyne and the 3 page of the 3 Chapter for as well hee, reade as well as hee. In the same page, for he could, reade he would. For consenting, reade consultinge.

In the 4 page of the 4 Chapter, for remayneth reade wanteth.

In the 4 page the 2 lyne of the 11 chapter, for sounds reade languages.

In the 5 page of the 16 Chapter, for abscure reade obscure.

In the 1 page of the 17 chapter, for haue reade haue.



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